



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge

## Proposed Buena Vista Addition

*Planning Update 1, January 2005*

### Greetings

This Planning Update from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides information about a proposal to expand the boundary of the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge, in Santa Cruz County, California. The Service proposes to add approximately 289 acres of land to the Refuge by acquiring the Buena Vista property with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and managing the entire property as part of the Refuge. In this update, the planning documents and alternatives are described, the planning process and how to provide comments are explained, and a map and planning schedule are included.

### What's in this Update?

The Refuge and Proposed Expansion .....	2
Providing Comments.....	2
Map of the Proposed Addition..	3
The Land Protection Planning Process.....	4
Other Contacts.....	5

### How Do I Comment on the Planning Documents?

Your participation is encouraged, your input will help further develop the planning documents. Contact information is on page 2. The Service would like to receive comments on the planning documents by February 18, 2005.



*The Ellicott Slough Refuge currently protects 200 acres of habitat important to the survival of the endangered Santa Cruz long-toed salamander. The proposed Buena Vista Addition (289 acres) could increase the amount of habitat protected for this and other species.*

*Photos USFWS*

## The Planning Documents for the Proposed Buena Vista Addition are Available

The Environmental Assessment, Land Protection Plan, and Conceptual Management Plan for the proposed boundary expansion have been prepared and are available for public review and comment. An explanation of each document follows.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) is a concise public document, prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. In it, the purpose and need for the proposed action are described, alternatives are analyzed, and an analysis of impacts is provided to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or finding of no significant impact.

In the Land Protection Plan (LPP), lands are identified and prioritized for potential acquisition from willing-sellers, and other methods of providing protection are described.

In the Conceptual Management Plan (CMP), a broad overview of the Service's proposed management approach to lands included within the National Wildlife Refuge System is presented. Management actions would be finalized only after additional planning and public input. Activities addressed in the CMP include: wildlife and habitat conservation, public uses and wildlife-dependent recreation, wildfire suppression and prescribed burning, rights-of-way, law enforcement, facilities management, public outreach, and interagency coordination.



*California Tiger Salamander*  
© Gary Nafis and CaliforniaHerps.com

## The Refuge and the Proposed Expansion

Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1975 for the protection of the endangered Santa Cruz long-toed salamander. Refuge-owned land (170 acres) is adjacent to the Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Ecological Reserve (30 acres owned by the California Department of Fish and Game), and the properties are managed cooperatively as the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge. The Service proposes to add approximately 289 acres of land to the Ellicott Slough Refuge by acquiring the Buena Vista property, with CDFG, and managing the entire property as part of the Refuge (see the map on page 3). The purpose of the acquisition is to enhance survival prospects of the endangered Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, threatened California tiger salamander, and the robust spineflower, an endangered plant.

## The Alternatives

Three alternatives, including the "No Action" alternative, are being evaluated. It is important to note that a decision on whether or not to expand the Ellicott Slough Refuge has not been made. Based on the analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment and review of public comments, the Service's California/Nevada Operations office will select an alternative that best fulfills the purposes of the proposed expansion and determine whether it would have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. The Director of the Service will determine whether or not to expand the Refuge boundary. A description of each alternative follows.

Under Alternative A, the No Action alternative, the Service would not acquire any interest in the Buena Vista property, and CDFG would continue to own the property. Public access would not likely be allowed. The current approved Refuge boundary would not change.

Under Alternative B, the Buena Vista property would continue to be owned by CDFG, but managed by another entity, possibly a non-profit organization. The Service would not be a participant.

Under Alternative C, the Service would expand the Refuge boundary to include the Buena Vista property, the Service and CDFG would jointly own the Buena Vista property in fee title, and the Service would manage the entire property as part of the Ellicott Slough Refuge. Alternative C is the Service's proposed action.

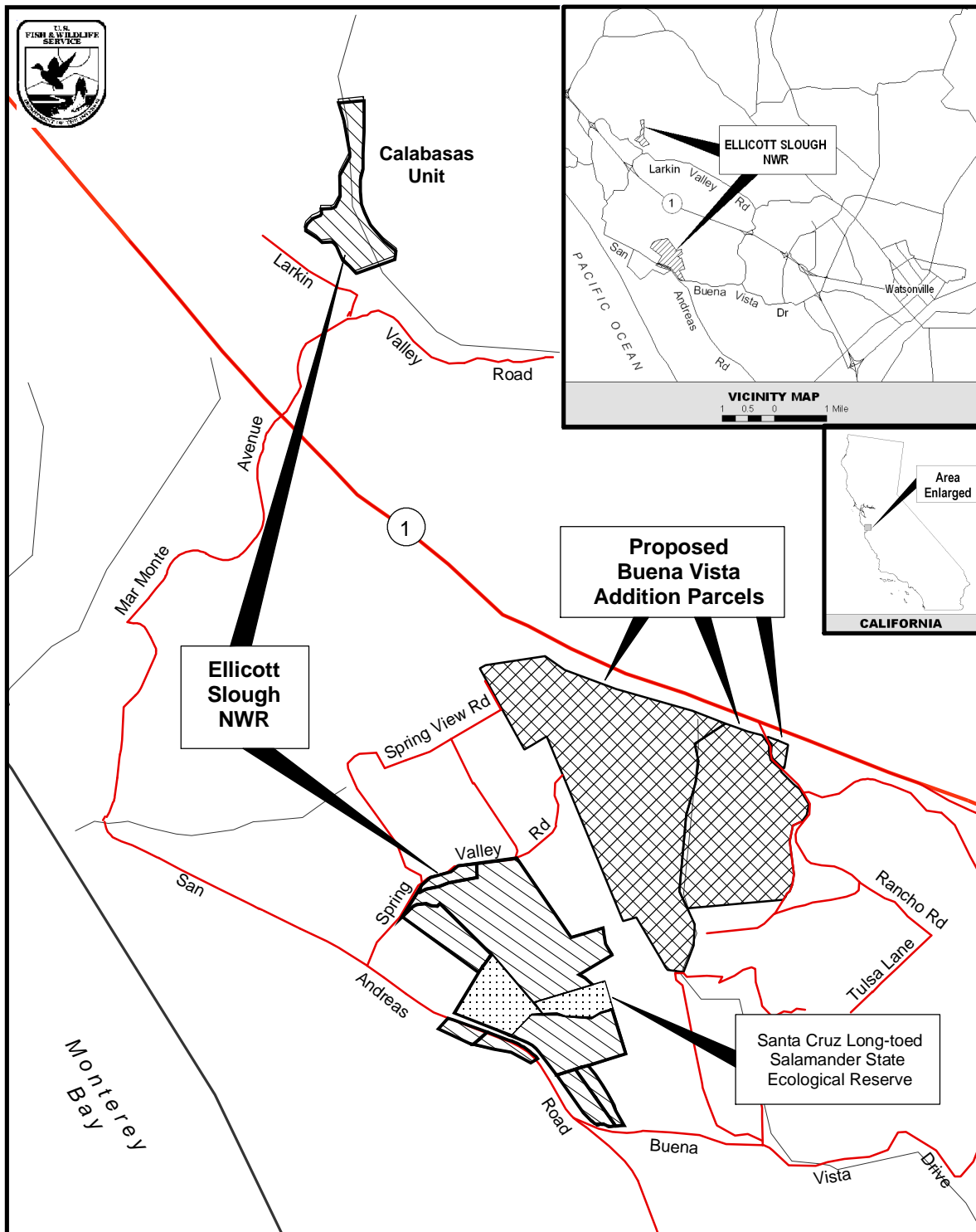
## Providing Comments

The Environmental Assessment, Land Protection Plan, and Conceptual Management Plan can be viewed and downloaded from the Service's Refuge Planning Website: <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning>. A limited number of printed documents are available by request from the individuals listed in this update. We encourage you to comment on the planning documents. Please send written comments by February 18, 2005, via mail, fax, or email to:

Richard Smith  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
California/Nevada Refuge Planning  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-1916  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846  
Phone: (916) 414-6502  
Fax: (916) 414-6512

FW1PlanningComments@r1.fws.gov  
(Please use Ellicott Slough in the  
subject line.)

*Other  
points of  
contact are  
listed on  
page 4.*



## PROPOSED BUENA VISTA ADDITION AND PARCEL BOUNDARIES

Prepared by: Branch of GIS & Cartography  
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## The Land Protection Planning Process

The Service initiates the land protection planning process to study a habitat conservation proposal. Proposals must demonstrate that adding habitat or lands to the National Wildlife Refuge System is the best way to achieve protection. The process is then carried out as follows.

- The planning process integrates three components—study and planning, public involvement, and environmental compliance.
- The documentation that evolves from the process includes an environmental compliance document, a land protection plan, and a conceptual management plan.
- These documents are provided to the public for review and comment to ensure the interested public is informed about Service proposals.
- Based on the alternatives presented, Service decision makers choose an appropriate course of action.
- If the lands are approved for addition, an expanded refuge boundary is established and the planning process is complete.

### Where are we in the planning process?

We are at step three described above, a schedule of the key planning steps follows (dates may change, if that occurs, new dates would be publicly announced):

Planning Documents Available/Public Comment Period Begins.....January 2005  
 Public Comment Period Ends.....February 18, 2005  
 Notice of Decision Issued.....April 2005

## Other Points of Contact

### For Information on the National Wildlife Refuge System, contact:

Marge Kolar, Project Leader or  
 John Bradley, Deputy Project Leader  
 San Francisco Bay  
 National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
 P.O. Box 524  
 Newark, California 94560  
 Phone: (510) 792-0222  
 Fax: (510) 792-5828

### For Information on Land Acquisition contact:

Steve Dyer, Realty Chief  
 Division of Realty  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2610  
 Sacramento, California 95825-1846  
 Phone: (916) 414-6445  
 Fax: (916) 414-6462



### USE OUR EMAIL OR WEBSITE

#### Email Comments to:

FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov

(Please use "Ellicott Slough NWR"  
 in the subject.)

#### Refuge Planning Web site:

<http://pacific.fws.gov/planning>



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Division of Refuge Planning  
911 NE 11th Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97232

*Address correction requested*

In this issue:  
Learn about  
and comment  
on a habitat  
conservation  
proposal for  
the Buena  
Vista property.

Visit the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge Web Site at: [http://pacific.fws.gov/refuges/field/CA\\_Ellicott\\_slough.htm](http://pacific.fws.gov/refuges/field/CA_Ellicott_slough.htm)